

Appendix 2

From: Local Government Association

Sent: 27 January 2015 17:13

To: Cox Tony

Subject: RE: Elected Members - Standards Regime under the Localism Act 2011

Dear Tony,

Thank you for your email of 26 January regarding the above, which has been passed to me.

As you might be aware, the LGA worked with the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) to produce a model code of conduct in response to the new standards regime introduced in the Localism Act 2011. This involved consideration of the role of councils working with their members in the light of the changes included in the Act.

The LGA strongly believes that elected members should behave appropriately and respectfully to all colleagues – elected or otherwise – but that adequate sanctions do currently exist locally if an elected member does not do so. Alongside the ballot box, these include issuing formal letters, formal censure by motion, removal of the member from one or more committees and adverse publicity. Councils are still required to nominate an independent person under the current arrangements.

The law clearly puts the responsibility for the new arrangements on elected members. We believe that councils are best placed to ensure high standards of behaviour of elected members through an effective local standards regime based on a locally agreed code of conduct and existing legislation. To date, we are not aware of any research by central government or other organisation into whether the change in arrangements has had ‘any significant change on elected member behaviour.’

As you will be aware, the new standards regime was fully introduced on 1 July 2012. The Secretary of State, Eric Pickles MP, indicated in June 2012 that his Department would review the policy in three to five years’ time and if we receive any indication that this is imminent we will of course communicate this with our member councils. LGA lead members have been clear that this is not an issue that they would wish to take up with Government at the present time, although we will continue to collect and monitor the views of our member authorities.

Kind regards,

Senior Adviser, Localism
Local Government Association
Direct: 020 7187 7384
Mobile: 07921 604 237